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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/I - KHOURY-KINCANNON, INR/NESA - HAY,  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: PRT KIRKUK: PUK CLEANS HOUSE IN KIRKUK FOLLOWING  
"STRATEGIC AGREEMENT" WITH KDP

REF: A. BAGHDAD 3255  
[B](#). BAGHDAD 2334  
[C](#). BAGHDAD 2455

Classified By: PRT Kirkuk Team Leader Howard Keegan for reasons 1.4 (b)  
and (d).

This is a Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT)  
message.

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Following the recent "Strategic Agreement"  
between Iraq,s two dominant Kurdish parties, the PUK removed  
several prominent and troublesome members of its "Reform"  
faction, particularly those who favor "special status" for  
Kirkuk under Iraqi Constitution Article 140. In conjunction  
with a public rebuke of the Reform faction's leader, the  
PUK,s moves signal to both the PUK and the KDP tighter  
discipline within the PUK, particularly on Article 140. END  
SUMMARY.

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THE PUK-KDP "STRATEGIC AGREEMENT"....  
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[1](#)2. (U) While vague about details, Kurdish party media  
outlets have trumpeted the July "Strategic Agreement" between  
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Secretary-General Jalal  
Talabani and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) President  
Masood Barzani as an example of Kurdish unity, especially to  
facilitate implementation of Iraqi Constitution Article 140  
and the accession of Kirkuk to the Kurdistan Regional  
Government (KRG). Independent media commentators and  
representatives of minor Kurdish parties, however, have  
expressed concern that the Agreement would increase the  
dominance of the PUK and KDP and lead to less political  
freedom in Kurdish areas.

[1](#)3. (SBU) According to PUK Kirkuk Relationship Bureau Chief  
Mohammed Deshwani (Strategic faction), the Strategic  
Agreement meant that PUK and KDP would form an "open, unified  
democracy," specifically: "unified administration" in the  
Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Kirkuk, "unified  
political speech," a "unified approach to neighboring  
countries," and a "unified approach to civil society." (Note:  
The term Strategic faction in this report refers to those  
"old-guard" PUK members close to Talabani. End note)

[1](#)4. (SBU) Mohammed said that, as part of the Strategic  
Agreement, the PUK and KDP had created two high-level joint  
committees. The first, responsible for representing Kirkuk  
and KRG interests in Baghdad, includes:  
-- Jalal Talabani (PUK)  
-- Fouad Masoom (PUK)  
-- Roazh Nori Shaways (KDP)  
-- Arif Tayfur (KDP)

-- Barham Saleh (PUK).

The second, responsible for making decisions on KRG (including Kirkuk) internal affairs, includes:

-- Masood Barzani (KDP)  
-- Kosrat Rasool (PUK)  
-- Jalal Jawher (PUK)  
-- Fadhil Mirani (KDP)  
-- Azardeen Berari (KDP).

Mohammed added that the PUK and KDP would soon stand up a joint Article 140 office in Kirkuk to reach out to Kirkuk, Arab and Turkman communities. The office, he said, would be led by Jalal Jawher (PUK) and Azardeen Berari (KDP). (NOTE: According to other sources, the two committees Red Mohammed mentioned were set up earlier this year and have been operating since at least June.)

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...PLUS CRITICISM FROM THE PUK REFORM FACTION...  
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15. (U) In August, leader of the PUK's Reform faction and former PUK Deputy Secretary General Nawshirwan Mustafa, writing in Rozhanama newspaper, had criticized Kurdish leadership's apparent inaction to implement Article 140. Echoing a common sentiment among Kurds, he pointed to the perks of office that Kurdish leaders in Baghdad enjoy and asked, "What have they done for themselves and what have they done for Kirkuk and Kurdish (disputed) areas?" In a September 7 press conference, Jalal Talabani pointed out the various difficulties in Article 140 implementation and, using extremely harsh and impolitic language, scolded Nawshirwan, replying, "We haven't gone to Baghdad because there are night

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clubs there!"

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...LEADS TO A PUK HOUSECLEANING IN KIRKUK  
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16. (C) On September 10, PUK Deputy Secretary-General Kosrat Rasool and Masood Barzani's advisor and personal representative Fadhil Miranhi visited Kirkuk, holding a joint meeting at PUK Center headquarters with local PUK and KDP leaders and the Kirkuk Governor (an independent) to announce the implications of the Strategic Agreement. Following the meeting, the PUK and KDP Kirkuk Center Chiefs, at a joint press conference, pledged to work as one team and not criticize one another. According to Kirkuk Provincial Council (PC) Chairman Rizgar Ali Hamajan (PUK Strategic faction), Kosrat told participants that the Strategic Agreement meant that the PUK and KDP were unified in their administration of Kirkuk, that Kurdish public officials must be loyal to this unified administration rather than to the PUK or KDP individually, and that party members should not criticize the PUK or KDP.

17. (C) The day before the meeting, the PUK disciplined several prominent members in Kurkuk and nearby areas. PUK Kirkuk Center Deputy Chief Tahseen Nawuk (Reform faction) was suspended from his job and party activities for three months; also, the PUK Tuz Khormatu and Erbil Center Chiefs were removed. Director of PUK-funded Kirkuk Television Arif Qorbani (Reform faction) was offered a "promotion" to a PUK media office in Sulaymaniah. Speaking privately with the PRT, Arif saw his removal as a consequence of his remarks on Article 140 and his activities to expose corruption among public officials in Kirkuk, including Kurdish party members. He accepted his removal as the PUK's "right," but said that he planned to remain in Kirkuk to continue his work against corruption. He reported that the directors of Aso and Rozhanma newspapers also had been forced out by the PUK.

18. (C) On September 12, Director of the Hawal Foundation

(publisher of the popular Kurdish newspaper Hawal and Arabic newspaper Neba) Shwan Daoudi told the PRT that, despite being an independent whose foundation receives no party funding, he too had been warned by the PUK after it had received complaints from the Kirkuk KDP Center Chief about his opinions, particularly his view that Kirkuk should have "special status" as an independent region rather than join the KRG. Echoing a complaint of Arif, Shwan thought that, because the PUK was trying to please the KDP under the Strategic Agreement, it was becoming more rigid, like the KDP. (NOTE: While the Hawal Foundation is, technically, independent, it began in Sulaymaniah in 2000 with a grant from Hallo Ibrahim Ahmed, brother of Herro Ibrahim Ahmed, wife of Jalal Talbani. Hawal thus has ties to the PUK, but Shwan and Hawal are regarded in Kirkuk as independent.)

¶9. (SBU) Asked about the removals, PC Chairman Rizgar replied that Arif's removal was justified because it was "not possible" that Arif, who had a lower rank within the PUK, should criticize him. PUK Relationship Bureau Chief Mohammed Deshwani, professing his personal admiration for Arif, initially insisted that Arif had, in fact, been offered a promotion; he subsequently reiterated the need of the Kurdish parties to "speak with one voice" due to foreign threats, but denied any link between the Strategic Agreement, Kosrat's visit, and the removals. PUK Kirkuk Center Chief Refer'at Abdullah also reiterated the need for the members of the PUK and KDP to "speak one line" and said that Arif and the other journalists removed had exceeded acceptable limits in their public criticism of the party and its members.

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COMMENT: PUK TIGHTENING UP,  
SENDING A MESSAGE TO BOTH THE PUK AND THE KDP  
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¶10. (C) Though the details of the Strategic Agreement remain vague, the PUK's application of it in Kirkuk clearly emphasizes the "unified political speech" that Red Mohammed mentioned. So far, all of the targets of the PUK's Kirkuk housecleaning are members of or associated with its Reform faction. Also, all are well-known supporters of (or at least sympathizers to) a "special status" option in the future Article 140 referendum on Kirkuk's status, under which Kirkuk would become an independent region with internal autonomy similar to that enjoyed by the KRG. The Kurdish parties, particularly the KDP, oppose this option, which is popular among independent and moderate Kurds in Kirkuk city, including many PUK Reform faction members (ref a). This has been a source of PUK-KDP friction: the KDP Kirkuk Center

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Chief has declared "special status" to be "against Kurdish national aims" and accused the PUK of "no commitment" on Article 140.

¶11. (C) At the same time, the PUK leadership has taken the opportunity to settle a few personal scores. Though both are Reform faction members, suspended PUK Kirkuk Center Deputy Chief Tahseen Nawuk had a bad relationship with his boss, Refer'at Abdullah. Fired Kirkuk Television Director Arif Qorbani broke with the Strategic faction and became a Reform member in the run-up to 2006 PUK Kirkuk Center leadership elections, leading to an incident in which his and PC Chairman Rizgar's bodyguards traded gunfire. Since then, Arif has been a persistent irritant to local Strategic faction members due to his reporting on corruption, including that of Strategic faction members holding public office.

¶12. (C) Compared to the KDP, the PUK had tolerated greater diversity of opinion among its members and more public criticism of party members. Despite Mohammed Deshwani's denial that they are connected, Jalal Talabani's public rebuke of Reform leader Nawshirwan Mustafa, Kosrat Rasool's visit to Kirkuk to lay down the law, and the PUK's Kirkuk housecleaning are together a clear message that Jalal and the Strategic faction are firmly in charge of the party and that party discipline, especially on Article 140, will be tighter

under the Strategic Agreement. The audience for this message includes not only PUK Reform faction members, but also PUK members dissatisfied with the slow pace of Article 140 implementation and the KDP, whose leadership points to the activities of PUK Reform faction members to complain of PUK indiscipline. Jalal's likely intent is not only to reinforce his control of the PUK, but also to minimize friction with the KDP.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES  
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¶13. (SBU) JALAL JAWHER: Jalal Jawher was born in Dibis, Kirkuk Province, northwest of Kirkuk city in an area famous for its Pershmerga activity. He joined the PUK Peshmerga in ¶1991. In 1997, he became Kirkuk Governor-in-exile, operating from Darbandihkan, Sulaymaniah Province. He was Sulaymaniah Minister of Municipality from 1998 to 2000. From 2000 to 2003, he was Sulaymaniah Minister of Industry. In 2001, he became a member of the PUK Politburo, and remains the only PUK Politburo member from Kirkuk. He is a member of the PUK's Strategic faction, answering directly to PUK Secretary General Jalal Talabani.

¶14. (C) In 2003, following liberation, Jalal Talabani appointed Jalal Jawher as PUK Center Chief and sent him to Kirkuk to set up the PUK party apparatus; in doing so, Jalal Jawher selected all of members holding leadership positions in the PUK Kirkuk Center. He also selected all of the PUK members of the Kirkuk Provincial Council (PC), including PC Chairman Rizgar Ali Hamajan, and all of the Kirkuk Province's PUK Directors-General (DGs). According to local PUK contacts, Jalal Jawher knew that he could not win the 2006 PUK Kirkuk Center leadership election due to public outrage at rampant corruption in Kirkuk's administration, for which the residents blame the Kurdish parties. Jalal therefore had his first deputy, Mohammed Deshwani, run in his place. To preserve his own, authority, however, Jalal encouraged his second deputy to run as well, thus ensuring the election of the current weak, Reform-faction leadership of the Kirkuk PUK Center. Thanks to this, his appointment of almost all of Kirkuk's PUK public officials, and his position on the PUK's Politburo, Jalal remains influential in Kirkuk.

¶15. (C) MOHAMMED DESHWANI (AKA Red Mohammed): Born in Kirkuk city, Mohammed Deshwani claims that his family fled during Saddam's "Arabization" campaigns. He joined the PUK Peshmerga, then returned to Kirkuk after liberation. His nickname derives from his facial skin tone, which is lighter than that of most Kurds and noticeably reddish. He is a member of the PUK Strategic faction, answering to PUK Politburo member Jalal Jawher. In 2003, Jalal Jawher, then Kirkuk PUK Center Chief, selected Mohammed as his first deputy, assigning him the security portfolio. In 2006, in Jalal's place, Mohammed stood for election as Center Chief, but lost narrowly to the current Reform-faction Center Chief, reportedly after having been undermined by Jalal. In August 2006, Mohammed was appointed as Chief of the PUK's Relationship Bureau in Kirkuk. According to local PUK contacts, Mohammed also is the Kirkuk Chief of the Dazga, the PUK intelligence agency headed by PUK Secretary General Jalal Talabani's son. He displays his tradecraft by insisting on taking photographs with U.S. officials whom he has met for the

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first time.  
CROCKER